

UNCLASSIFIED 9/11/75
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TELEGRAM

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FROM AmEmbassy BUENOS AIRES		CLASSIFICATION [REDACTED]
E.O. 11652:	GDS	
TAGS:	PINT, PINS, ASEC, AR	
SUBJECT:	Military vs Subversion vs Damasco	
ACTION:	SecState WASHDC [REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 6119	
Ref:	BA 5781	
	<p>1. Summary. Under military pressure, GOA has outlawed Montoneros. Military is pushing for other measures to strengthen government's hand against terrorists, and may itself be moving toward greater participation. End Summary.</p> <p>2. The GOA, September 8, declared the Montoneros an illegal organization. The Montoneros, once a politically active sector of the Peronist Party, removed themselves from it over a year ago because of the conservative turn Peronism had taken after Peron's death. From the time they went underground, the Montoneros became the largest terrorist organization in Argentina. The GOA's outlawing of the Montoneros, long overdue given their terrorist activities, was in itself no surprise. The significance is that Interior Minister Damasco, who hoped to appeal to leftist Peronists in order to expand his very narrow political base, had worked to avoid this step. However, Damasco's power, which is derived from Mrs. Peron, has declined rapidly since she lost her recent contest with the Military (see reftel) and evidence indicates Damasco was forced by new</p>	

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FORM FS-413
11-72

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
(X) Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full
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Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

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Army Commander Videla to declare the Montoneros outlaws.

32. Legat has obtained information that, during week of September 1, Damasco rejected recommendation by Director of Federal Security that responsibility for Montonero affairs be transferred from a monitoring department in Federal Police of Argentina to department that specializes in illegal guerrilla activities--intelligence and repression. During this same period the Military CINCs, Executive Branch, legislators and other high military and civilian authorities began a series of joint and separate meetings on antisubversion. Damasco's efforts to tone down the Military pitch were in evidence at the September 4 meeting. According to press accounts, he said the antisubversion fight demanded political action and that the relaxed atmosphere for such talks with various groups did not yet exist but that the government was determined to have them. This delaying tactic was coupled with his suggestion that study be made on possibility of freeing detainees held under Executive Order. This went over badly with Military, as indeed did Damasco's political maneuvering in general. Damasco's loss in this volley, plus his defeat in the recent battle between Mrs. Peron and the Military, have placed him in a very weak position and his chances for remaining in office do not appear very bright.

43. The Military has moved rapidly to push positive action programs against subversion on various fronts. ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ In publicly pushing for a more active Military role in counterterrorist activities, the institutional prestige of the services will be enhanced or tarnished by the results they obtain.

5. The Military is pressing hard for additional measures to deal with subversion. The creation of a National Security Coordinating Committee seems to be the next item on the Military list. The committee would coordinate all activities in the antirsubversion war but also probably command some operations. The Military wants the committee headquartered in the Defense Ministry, and probably function as a mission of the Joint ^{Staff} Chiefs.

6. ~~XXXXXX~~ The Congress will be asked to produce more effective laws to deal with the terrorists. Armed Forces authorities are also asking for the creation of a Military Tribunal to try all subversive cases. Justice Ministry officials are reviewing possible changes in the Penal Code of Argentina to make it more responsive to the terrorist problem. DAO reports that almost all the ^{new} commanders and seconds in command of the ^{various} Army Corps, result/~~ing~~ ^{ing from} changes after the crisis (reftel), are hardliners with regard to professionalism and terrorism. If adequate institutional changes are made by the other branches of government, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ an intensive crackdown seems in the offing against the terrorists.

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